

James Madison to Edmund Pendleton, November 13, 1781. Transcription: The Writings of James Madison, ed. Gaillard Hunt. New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1900-1910.

TO EDMUND PENDLETON.¹

1 From the Madison Papers (1840).

Philadelphia, November 13, 1781.

Dear Sir, —Nothing definitive has taken place on the territorial cessions. That of Virginia will not, I believe, be accepted with the conditions annexed to it. The opinion seems to be, that an acceptance of the cession of New York will give Congress a title which will be maintainable against all the other claimants. In this, however, they will certainly be deceived; and even if it were otherwise, it would be their true interest, as well as conformable to the plan on which the cessions were recommended, to bury all further contentions by covering the territory with the titles of as many of the claimants as possible. We are very anxious to bring the matter to issue, that the State may know what course their honor and security require them to take. The present thinness of Congress makes it but too uncertain when we shall be able to accomplish it.

Will not the Assembly pay some handsome compliments to the Marquis, for his judicious and zealous services whilst the protection of the country was entrusted to him? His having baffled, and finally reduced

to the defensive, so powerful an army as we now know he had to contend with, and with so disproportionate a force, would have done honor to the most veteran officer, added to

Library of Congress

his other merits and services, constitutes a claim on their gratitude which I hope will not be unattended to.